



STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Public Hearing – March 7, 2022
Transportation Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Joseph Giulietti
Department of Transportation

H.B. 5256 - AN ACT STUDYING THE CONSOLIDATION OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICTS.

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) supports H.B. 5256, An Act Studying the Consolidation of Local and Regional Transit Districts.

CTDOT owns the local bus systems in Hartford, New Haven, Stamford, Waterbury, New Britain, Bristol, Meriden, and Wallingford, and operates them under the CTtransit brand name.

The Department owns all the rolling stock that provides CTtransit services, as well as bus storage and maintenance facilities in the Hartford, New Haven, Stamford, and Waterbury CTtransit divisions. The New Britain and Bristol Divisions operate out of shared facilities. CTDOT's Office of Transit and Ridesharing oversees bus capital projects throughout the state.

In the other non-CTtransit service areas, local transit districts were created to assume operation of bus services. Those transit districts are listed below:

- Greater Bridgeport Transit Authority
- Estuary Transit District d.b.a. 9 Town Transit
- Housatonic Area Regional Transit
- Middletown Transit District
- Milford Transit District
- Northeastern Connecticut Transit District
- Northwestern Connecticut Transit District
- Norwalk Transit District
- Southeast Area Transit District
- Valley Transit District
- Windham Region Transit District

These local districts provide these bus transit services under the direction of local Boards of Directors representing the member towns. The Department enters into transit operating assistance contracts with the districts to cover operating deficits up to a predetermined budget amount. Some municipalities do provide some financial support to these transit districts, but the Department supports about 90% of the deficit funding in the urban systems, and the state and federal government provide 83% of the deficit funding in the rural systems.

The Department contracts directly for federally mandated complementary ADA paratransit services in the CTtransit service areas, and significantly subsidizes the transit district ADA operations in the non-CTtransit service areas.

Over the last few years, the Department has been working to strengthen local transit districts to improve regional transportation options, customer service, and operating efficiencies. Recent successes include the merger of the Windham Regional Transit District and UConn Storrs Campus transportation system; the 9-Town (Estuary Transit) and Middletown Area Transit (MAT) merger; and the collaboration between CTtransit Waterbury Division and Northwestern Connecticut Transit District.

These efforts are to strengthen and support those smaller organizations that may struggle due to their smaller staff sizes and fewer resources. It allows for more depth of staffing and the technological support of smaller transit districts without the need to increase administrative expenses to build out staffing levels at each organization.

The Department also suggests language that allows the task force to consider not only potential transit district consolidation scenarios, but also elimination of districts (e.g., two transit districts exist in name only, but provide no services) and strategic partnerships short of full consolidation.

For further information or questions, please contact Anne Kleza (anne.kleza@ct.gov) at the Department of Transportation, (860) 594-3013.